

**State Noxious Weed Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting**  
**305 Interlocken Parkway, Broomfield, CO**  
**May 1, 2015**

**Introductions and Attendance:**

Members present: Fran Pannebaker, Tom Talley, Ed Norden, Pat Hayward, Matt Moorhead, Lauren Kolb, Larry Hoozee, Matt Scott, Karn Stiegelmeier, Shawn Wissel

Members absent: Louis Bridges, Jack Flowers, Evan Jeffries, George Beck, Larry Vickerman, Jim Walker, Elizabeth Brown

Public: Charlie Pannebaker

CDA Staff: Eric Lane, John Kaltenbach, Patty York, Steve Ryder, Cecily Mui

Chris Wiseman, Deputy Commissioner, CDA – Welcomed and thanked members of the committee

**Request and appointment of committee positions:**

Secretary position: Consensus was staff did a great job at the last meeting. Steve volunteered staff to do it for a year.

**Minutes from the last meeting and Staff Update:**

Minutes from the last meeting accepted as presented.

Pat commented that website and mapping have come a long way in a short period of time.

**Legislative update – Steve Ryder presented:**

Weed Fund fiscal year 2015-2016 was approved for the same funding level as last year. CDA received 75 grant requests in January 2015. Of those grants, approximately 67 (including SPF) were funded. Steve and Eric explained how funding and grants will be administered without continuous funding approval from the legislature and how the program is budgeted funds annually. Eric explained that if grant funds are not fully utilized within the same fiscal year, the grant money need to be returned to the state, Eric hopes that he's found a way to retain the funds for program furthering the program. The increased grant funding and new grant administration requirements are taking up more of staff time; the program will be hiring someone to help with grant administration for a few months.

HB 1006, Phreatophyte Control Bill: The initial proposal was to put this new grant program into the CDA Noxious Weed Program for administration. This is a \$5-million per year program. Currently it doesn't seem likely that it will be enacted this year due to the number of other bills that the legislature still needs to move on before the end of next week. However, this bill was looked upon favorably by the legislature; Eric thinks that the fundamental issue is coming up for money. This bill may come back next year. The latest suggestion is to administer and fund the grant via the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Steve thinks spending \$5 million in the first year would be extremely difficult. Again there is a need to get continuous spending authority.

HB 1485, Healthy Habitats Coalition Bill: This federal bill was introduced again this session. The initial state funding component has been removed. Now, the focus of the bill is to set a goal for federal agencies to reduce noxious weeds by at least 5% annually, which is better than the current situation where many sites are seeing increases in noxious weeds annually. This will also give a focus on money going directly to weed control on the ground. This will also address pesticide usage requirements/restrictions/allowances on federal lands. This is a relatively bipartisan bill.

**Biocontrol/Insectary Update – John Kaltenbach and Cecily Mui presented:**

Request-a-bug list: lots and lots of requests for bindweed mites (had trouble finding enough last year). No longer collecting galls for Canada thistle due to high hopes for the rust.

Working on Russian knapweed agents; had a successful overwintering site in the San Luis Valley where it's very cold. Tom Talley suggested working together in La Plata County. Fran requested common names of biocontrol agents on outreach material to help with communication. Cecily is working with the Insectary to determine focus areas for biocontrol needs. She is working with Sonya Ortega from insectary to utilize GIS to overlay biocontrol release data with county reported noxious weed locations. Ed asked if we're getting better data in the mapping yet. Cecily mentioned that it is getting better but it still varies significantly between counties. Tom mentioned that they are in an extreme drought in SW CO. Is there any data relating success of this Russian knapweed agent with water needs? John said not yet since it's such a new biocontrol program (entering the 3<sup>rd</sup> field season).

Toadflax: 2 weevils, one targets yellow, and one targets Dalmatian. Dalmatian toadflax weevils have been used in Poudre River area where High Park fire was.

Tamarisk: 19 monitoring sites around state; 40% kill in Fountain Creek. Bugs are continuing to migrate.

Canada thistle: grant from USDA ARS to collect, redistribute, and study the Canada thistle rust.

Established 80 sites last year across the state of Colorado; it may need a few years to show signs.

Fran asked what is considered a good site of Canada thistle for the rust. John said an area approximately 60 feet wide (20 meters). John explained the process for rust inoculation. Put rust on in the fall is key.

**Sage Grouse Summit Update – Steve Ryder presented:**

One of the biggest contributors to the decline of sage-grouse habitat is fire. The fire cycle for sagebrush is 90-100 years, but annual invasive grasses are causing a major shift to 3-5 years. This acknowledgement that noxious weeds are linked to endangered species issues may bring needed attention and resources noxious weed management in the western states. The WWCC agreed with the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies to put on a summit joining wildlife and noxious weed officials from around the western states, scheduled for week of July 6<sup>th</sup> in Boise, Idaho. Goal of summit is to address weed management in the western states broadly, and specific to sage-grouse habitat protection. The WAFWA working Group have released a report dealing with how "Invasive Plant Management impacts the Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG)" and a website on invasive plant management and greater sage-grouse conservation ([www.wafwa.org](http://www.wafwa.org)). The summit hopes to guide the development of an action plan that can be incorporated into the federal listing decision. Matt M. talked about other potential species that could be listed, and that managers have to do active management to help prevent it from actually being listed. Steve commented that the focus of noxious weed management to enhance protected species management is a new avenue that our program may need to consider in future work.

**Compliance Waiver Update – Cecily Mui and Steve Ryder presented:**

DBG submitted a waiver request in December 2014 so they can cultivate some listed species in their gardens. They no longer requesting a waiver for African rue and will remove it after they collect herbarium specimens. They don't have a preference on Cypress spurge and want to know if we want them to keep it for educational purposes. They do want to keep a Japanese knotweed cultivar and absinth wormwood. In the follow-up with DBG after our last discussion, Cecily suggested a more detailed monitoring and containment plan to them. She is also determining if they have common St. Johnswort in the garden. DBG does want to do an educational campaign for any species that they do end up keeping. Cecily wants us to think of additional questions we have for DBG, and also, if we are going to let them grow noxious weeds, what do we want to require of them? Matt M. wanted to know what we think about this from a policy perspective. Steve said that most of the time, what we expect from these requests are people who can't deal with the amount of weeds on their property; questions

arise since this is a different and more educational approach. Lauren mentioned that most people don't read signs, and Shawn mentioned that this will set a precedent. Eric asked if there a way to make an effective educational campaign that is better than putting a sign in front of a plant? He suggested that maybe the research part of the garden can take part and maybe there's a larger story, and a larger collaboration that can take place.

Recommendation from committee is for DBG is remove these plants, not grant the waiver, and suggest that they be intentional in an educational campaign on noxious weeds. Setting a precedent for just these three plants doesn't seem to be worth it. Whatever is decided, this decision will have an influence on other areas of Denver as well because there are other public educational organizations like the zoo and Ocean Journey that have noxious weeds on their property.

Steve mentioned that there may be another compliance waiver coming from Boulder County from a commercial business for knotweed which is being grown as a screening fence. Karn doesn't think a "screen" should even be considered for a waiver.

#### **Rule Update:**

##### List B management plan - Cecily Mui and Steve Ryder

Cecily gave an overview of the List B data and rulemaking process. She's getting ready to draft the updates. Due to the new grant administration responsibility, we do not have a draft to present until the next meeting in August, which unfortunately is when the proposed updates are due to the Commissioner's office for posting for public review in Sept/Oct. Steve talked about how the committee can still give comments to the draft. He suggested an email round of review to get comments from the committee before submittal to the Commissioner. He and Shawn will also follow-up with how the committee will be able to provide a recommendation before it gets submitted.

##### Possible new listings and designations – Patty York and Steve Ryder

- Flowering rush is currently on the watch list. It is being considered for List A listing as a preventative measure because it's very difficult to eliminate once established. There are no known ways to chemically kill this species; CSU is currently working on additional control research.
- Consider moving phragmites off the watch list because phragmites seems to be a secondary invasive once tamarisk is removed. A year ago an institute started a study to determine if a plant is a native or non-native phragmites because they look similar. Samples from Colorado were submitted. We are still waiting on results.
- Aquatic species listing was discussed at the last meeting. The CPW - CO Fish Health Board sent a letter requesting additional aquatic species listing on the noxious weed list. CSU Scott Nissen suggested and researched a new aquatic species assessment tool. However, there are concerns that the new assessment tool may recommend too many species for listing that might not be a concern for Colorado. Many of the species of concern lack cold hardiness data that's important for our decision making. Patty and Steve are looking for additional information to address cold hardiness information for aquatic species that can be potentially noxious. Yellow floating heart, parrot feather, and elodea species may be of greatest concern according to Scott Nissen.

Staff will continue to gather information on these species to see if we can meet the August submittal deadline for this year's rule update.

##### Listing hybrid noxious weeds - Steve Ryder

Staff will look at the language to list all hybrids of noxious weeds for control similar to current listing for knotweed hybrids. These considerations are for Dalmatian and yellow toadflax, as well as, diffuse and spotted knapweed.

**Local Entity Capacity Building – Steve Ryder presented and led discussion:**

Issues and concerns affecting local capacity building:

Lack and cut in funding, lack of interest to set up programs, logistics in setting up local programs, coordinated treatment efforts, limited ability to reach other entities like HOAs and utilities, enforcement is at the local government level and there needs to be participation from them

Discussion:

- Ed asked what the situation is with CDOT and withdrawal of weed control funding to counties. Steve says that they are still required to continue with management per the Noxious Weed Act, but some CDOT districts are wanting to make these efforts in-house. They are meeting regionally (Upper Arkansas and Montezuma) to discuss what will be done, so that these areas will not lose ground in their weed efforts. Karn and Ed mentioned that their counties contract with CDOT to treat noxious weeds for them. The committee wants more information from Jim Walker on this shift.
- Karn would like to see a presentation on weed management models from different areas of CO, including Weed District models. Matt M. mentioned that it's important to keep a focus on both sustaining programs and encouraging new programs to start in areas without programs. Steve mentions that the desire to set up local program needs to start at the local level. However, there are complexities with local funding and turnover in weed managers. Ed also mentions that turnover in county commissioner leadership and their knowledge of noxious weed requirements also negatively impacts sustainable programs and/or the need to create programs. There seems to be a need for education on Noxious Weed Act responsibilities with both counties and municipalities. Cecily suggested brainstorming ways to get decision makers into local venues of education to understand noxious weed management requirements. Matt M. mentioned that education needs to be coupled with a resource solution; there may be a need to also brainstorm resource solutions.
- Steve mentions that he is interested in changing the focus to a more holistic approach involving prevention and protection of weed-free areas, rather than a message simply to control listed species. Matt M. continued by stating that it gives us a broader framework to stage the educational message. Ed mentioned that people were engaged when people were shown beneficial horticultural species alternatives to noxious weeds. This echoes Matt's idea for the need to couple solutions with education.
- Shawn mentioned that the public also needs to learn what healthy, natural areas should look like because these are sometimes perceptions that lands should be manicured especially in urban areas.
- Matt M. mentioned there may be a need to discuss collective risks tied to benefits which is what the economic impact study is getting at. There may be a need to set up demonstration areas via our grants with a 3-5 year start up noxious weed program that then encourages a longer term local program adoption that is sustainable.
- Tom suggested that there might be opportunities to explore local programs that already exists, like 4-H and farm bureau. Karn echoed that their NRCS did a program to reach out to large acreage landowners on noxious weeds and this increased local participation.
- Ed thinks that our maps are a good tool for outreach and we should find ways to get more mapping data out to the public.

- Shawn suggested media outreach. Several people suggested including the economic impact studies information out into our message. Ed mentioned getting noxious weed info into the Pedal the Plains event. Karn suggests more press releases.

Steve asked about the process for how the committee wants to discuss these broad topics in the future. Matt M. suggested that the committee's discussion can feed in a strategic planning with action. He has seen facilitated strategic planning sessions work well in some situations; they can help identify obstacles, solutions, and action items.

Steve asked about other topic areas for future meetings.

- Karn wants to see collaboration as a regular topic to come back to at meetings.
- Shawn wants to see policy and enforcement.

### **Roundtable/Announcements**

Next meeting: Tentatively on August 20-21, 2015

Potentially Morgan County area, as was offered by Fred Midcap. Steve will check on that option.

Ed mentioned Canon City area potentially; he will check to see if that is possible.

Roundtable: Karn mentioned that there has been a contractor doing herbicide treatment on a dam face; the regulations around dams and drones are limiting this option. She wanted to know if others had working with contractor to treat weeds with drones.

Respectfully compiled and submitted by Cecily Mui, Patty York, and Steve Ryder.